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Analysis of passives constructions in French based on functional-typological grammar by givón

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Abstract

The theory of functional-typological grammar by Givón emphasizes on the understanding of communicative grammar of the speakers by investigating the format, meaning and function of language. The present study aims to analyze and propose a conceptual framework of functional-typological grammar by Givón. This theory explains the nature of language as a tool for communication based on pragmatics. This study is gathered from related researches of functional-typological grammar by Givón (2001) with the analysis of French passives. The data is from published documents, books and printed documents, with the exclusion of written language from the Internet sources, namely Instagram and Facebook, and spoken language. The results showed that there were five forms of passives constructions in French which were categorized into prototypical passives and less prototypical passives. The first category was the marked passive with auxiliary as Être + participe passé (the past participle) that shows the agent appeared in the clause and preceded by preposition “par” “de” or “dans”. This includes the similar construction that the agent does not appear in the clause or demote the agent. Additionally, the second category (less prototypical passives) showed three the prominent features. The first feature is the clause that leaves out the auxiliary and maintains past participle in the meaning of passive voice. The second one is the passive in verbal pronominal form or verb with pronoun “se” in the passive meaning. The last feature is the active clauses that begins with subject pronoun “on” to demote the agent. The relationship and differences of anti-passive voice and passive voice were indicated in this study.

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1. Introduction

This study focuses on the analysis of passives in French under the theory of functional-typological grammar by Givón. This linguistic typological study investigates differences in the language with the universal types from the empirical data and summarized the data inductively from a number of language studies. Cross-languages study to indicate the universal types is used in the present study. The emphasis is primarily more on language function than form with no preferences on particular theory and analysis. Linguistic typologists consider universal types of language and conceptual framework in language structures, for example original structures of the language that have not been changed or negatively criticized (Kullavanijaya, Pranee, 2002; Prasithrathsint, Amara, 2006)

Language typology has been variedly defined and the typologists propose three main definitions. 1) Language typology is a typological classification of languages that have similar and different language features. Different languages that share similar features are categorized in the same type. 2) Language typology is a study of linguistic pattern and type to indicate the prominent linguistic features of that particular language. This selected language pattern is called language domain. This language domain contains different parameters or strategies and each parameter has particular linguistic types. 3) Language typology refers to a type of linguistic analysis that differs from other analysis. This definition originates from linguists who believe that language typology contains communicative function, therefore, functional-typological approach in language is proposed. This approach employs grammatical analysis (Kullavanijaya, Pranee, 2002) and the prominent linguist in this approach is Talmy Givón (2001).

The theory of functional-typological grammar by Givón emphasizes on grammar used by the speakers in form, meaning and function. It is believed that all languages have universal function that can be typologically classified. Givón (2001)'s theory states that this grammar can explain nature of language as a communicative tool used and understood by community members. This linguistic study integrates socio-cultural aspects and pragmatics with the focus on both form and function of language. Context therefore must be taken into account in this theory through the relationship of function and structure of language in mapping. Moreover, cognitive linguistics plays a significant role in Givón's theory as this linguistic field focuses on cognitive system reflecting function and meaning of language. Although sentence-level study is important discourse-level in communicative knowledge is also significant under this theory.

On the part of passive, Givón states that passive is one of grammatical category. Most of linguists nowadays propose definitions of passive that the subject of passive construction is a patient. In this syntactic construction, the agent appears or does not appear and the main verb relates with transitive verb in active constructions. Passive sentences or patient promoted sentences are used interchangeably with active sentences by the speakers based on the significance of the topic. In the case that the speaker wants to emphasize on patient or in the patient-promoted sentence, passive is thus used.

From this theory, researcher employed functional-typological grammar by Givón to analyze and explain French passives syntactic construction and category.

1.1. Objective

1. To study a conceptual framework of functional-typological grammar in voice and de-transitivization of Givón's theory.
2. To use this conceptual framework in the study of structure of French passive voice

Theoretical framework

The theoretical framework in this study is gathered from related researches of functional-typological grammar by Givón (2001) in voice and de-transitivization that transfers transitive verb to be in-transitive verb. The focus of this study is emphasized on the analysis of French passives based on functional-typological grammar by Givón

2. Research procedures

This study is gathered from related researches of functional-typological grammar by Givón (2001) with the analysis of French passives. The data is from published documents, books and printed documents, with the exclusion of written language from the Internet sources, namely Instagram and Facebook, and spoken language.

The functional-typological grammar theory by Givón refers to passive construction that is a type of de-transitive voice. In other words, it is a voice with transitive verb that contains de-transitive function. It is a transition from transitive verb to in-transitive verb which contrasts to active-direct voice. In active-direct voice, the agent as the subject of the clause has the verb in transitive event or transitive verb which does not have the object. Similarly, the agent does not appear which can be predictable and contain de-transitive construction from the following hypotheses.

1) Transitivity and voice

Three definitions of transitivity in clause construction to convey the meaning are as below.

- Agent in transitive clauses acts as subject of the sentence and makes the action more obvious.
- Patient in transitive event acts as direct and obvious patient.

-Verb in transitive clause has clear context and acts as verb and auxiliary representing time. Verb in this construction presents past, perfect and real events.

2) The pragmatics of voice

Concept of the pragmatics of voice from pragmatic's view relates to the relationship between the topic of agent and patient. In the case that the topic of the clauses acts as the agent, it will be active-direct voice whereas the passive voice will occur when the topic is the patient. Followings are explanations.

- Active voice in this clauses type, agent is at the top level and has the highest role in the topic and acts as the subject in the clauses.

-Passive voice, agent is not at the top and does not have the role in the topic. Non-agent in this clause type also has the highest role of the topic.

-Anti-passive voice, agent is still significant in the topic, but the patient in the topic will be less significant than the active voice or this patient does not occur at all. In grammatical aspect, anti-passive voice construction shares a number of in-transitive verb clauses. This construction can be combined with verb or presented indirectly.

Givón states that passive voice construction contains 3 significant grammatical features 1) agent demotion- agent occurring in non-major parts of the clauses or does not occur at all, 2) non-agent promotion- promoting patient, denied by occurring as the clauses subject, and 3) main verb as de-transitive verb in the form of in-transitive verb.

Givón indicates 3 main constructions of syntactic structure of passive clauses as below.

- 1) Syntactic structure that demotes the agent or the agent is not mentioned at all.
- 2) Syntactic structure that the agent is not promoted whereas other parts are promoted

3) Syntactic structure of passive voice that maintains passive voice verb as transitive verb. In other word, this construction syntactically uses verb in passive voice.

Additionally, Givón proposes the contextual function of passive clauses in 2 aspects.

1) The agent demotion domain is to demote the agent or the agent is not referred to in the clauses. Examples are as follows.

Unknown is the construction that the agent is not mentioned because the agent is unknown or unidentified. For example,

...He was killed (by an unknown person) in the Boer war...

Anaphorically predictable is the construction that is predictable from the agent or aforementioned clauses such as,

...The soldiers invaded the village; soon the entire place was burned down...

Cataphorically given is the construction with the post-reference for example,

...There was no telling what might have happened if he had not been interrupted. The dog had been whimpering and whining...

Generically predictable is the construction that agent is not mentioned from the known agent such as,

The plane was brought down safely.

Universal is the construction that agent is not mentioned from the known facts for example,

...as everybody knew, dogs were psychic...Now, it was known that these were actually fifth-dimensional objects...

Impersonal-subject is the construction that agent is demoted, but still acts as the subject of the clauses to illustrate,

One used to work hard in those days.

They don't eat rice there.

Unimportant is the construction that agent is not necessary to be referred to such as,

They found her nude on the beach last night...

Predictable as the author of the text is the case that writer is understood by the reader such as,

...Enough has been said (by the author) here of a subject which will be treated more fully in a subsequent chapter...

Low thematic import changes the definite article to indefinite article to demote the agent. Normally, topic uses definite article for example,

...his son was run over by a motorcar...

Personal, inter-personal, social, cultural reasons are the middle voice construction, particularly used by children, interpersonal, social and cultural reasons. Verb in this construction is transitive form in active voice, but patient acts as subject as in passive voice for example,

It broke.

2) The non-agent promotion domain is the construction that agent is not promoted, but other parts are promoted such as,

Default/ impersonal that promotes patients for example,

They found his body down-river.

"They" is the subject of non-referential subject clause.

Be-passive promotes passive voice such as,

Be-passive such as,

John was killed in an accident.

Get-passive for example,

Mary got elected on her second try

Middle voice is the construction that verb is in the form of transitive verb as in active voice, but patient is the subject as in the passive voice for example,

The window broke

Potential is transformed from verb to adjective such as,

This book is eminently readable

Givón also mentions the relationships and differences of anti-passive voice and passive voice. In passive clauses, patient is promoted as the subject of clauses and demotes the agent in the clauses. The main verb is transformed from transitive to in-transitive verbs with the passive voice indicator in front of transitive verb. On the contrary, anti-passive voice clauses, agent is important in the topic, but the patient in the topic is more demoted in this clause type than in active voice. In grammatical aspect, this construction is combined with verb or indirectly indicated as the following examples.

Examples of passive clauses are as follows.

(Active) Mary ate the apple quickly.

(Passive) The apple was eaten by Mary.

In passive construction, patient is promoted as the subject of the clauses whereas agent is demoted. Contrastively, anti-passive voice clause demotes patient and passive voice. Following are some examples.

(Anti-passive) Mary ate (patient) quickly.

(Active) Mary slept late.

Furthermore, functional-typological grammar theory by Givón corresponds with the study of Comrie, B. (1989)

in *Language Universals and Linguistic Typology* book. Comrie (1989) states that active voice and passive construction is correlated. Subject of active voice construction is agentive phrase in the passive construction reflected in overt subject in passive construction. Comrie (1989) also considers passive construction in both function and syntactic meaning that both active voice and passive voice constructions are correlated. To be precise, agentive phrase acting as patient in the active voice construction occurs as subject in passive construction. On the other hand, agentive phrase acting as subject in active voice occurs as oblique object.

Additionally, Keenan (1990) (cited in Prasithrathsint, Amara, 2006) summarizes the analysis of linguistics typology from the study of passive voice from languages around the world as below.

- 1) Passive voice occurs in some languages.
- 2) Languages with different types of passive voice have only particular common type passive voice or have only common passive voice.
- 3) Languages with common type of passive voice have more than one different passive voice constructions.
- 4) Languages with any types of passive voice cover perfective aspect of verb.
- 5) Languages with more than one common type of passive voice have different passive voice in terms of meaning in aspect.
- 6) Subject of passive voice must not be interpreted as patient when acting as object of transitive verb in active voice.
- 7) Different passive voice in one language varies from the amount of impact of the subject in positive and positive way as in Thai language. This difference is found less in languages around the world than difference in aspect.
- 8) Languages with transformed objective to be passive voice must be able to transform the object phrase to be passive voice.
- 9) Languages with common passive voice can passivize clause with verb 'give' and 'show' as the subject acting as agent. Passive voice with the agent benefits in the sentences may or may not occur in that language.

3. Analytical result

From the data collection, researcher selected passive constructions in French to analyse and categorize. These constructions were found in newspaper and printed documents, excluded some sources namely the data from the spoken sources and the Internet: Facebook and Instagram. This research article is part of the data collection of the researcher's dissertation.

The data analysis procedures are based on functional-typological grammar by Givón and French passives were categorized into prototypical passives and less prototypical passives. To be precise, prototypical passives share universal qualifications and these passives are mostly used in pairs switching as active voice. In this type prototype passive, subject of passive clauses are derived from object of active clauses, demoted agent appear or does not appear, verbs in passive voice are de-transitive verbs and are marked passive with auxiliary. Less prototypical passives are not normally found and they are lack of some universal qualifications that correspond with the study from Singnoi Wongwattana, Unchalee (2013) on passive constructions in Thai: an analysis in the Framework of Functional-Typological Grammar.

From a summary of French passive clauses forms, five forms are found and explanations are as below.

- 1) The marked passive with auxiliary as Être + participe passé (the past participle) that shows the agent appeared in the clause and preceded by preposition "par" "de" or "dans"
- 2) The marked passive with auxiliary as Être + participe passé (the past participle) that the agent does not appear in the clause or demote the agent.
- 3) The clause that leaves out the auxiliary and maintains past participle in the meaning of passive voice.
- 4) The passive in verbal pronominal form or verb with pronoun "se" in the passive meaning.
- 5) The active clauses that begins with subject pronoun "on" to demote the agent.

According to five forms of French passive clauses, only the first and second forms correspond with the study from Chevalier, J.C., et al. (1964), Grevisse, M. (1986). These authors state that passive voice is a promoting patient

clause by occurring as the clause subject and agent demotion by occurring in non-major parts of the clause or does not occur at all. Main verb acts as transitive verb and is marked passive with auxiliary as Être + participe passé, the agents are preceded by preposition “par” or “de”. Gezundhajt, H. (2003) adds that apart from two prepositions, “dans” is included which correspond with the study of Maligul, Sa-ang (2013), she states that apparent features of passive clauses are marked passive with auxiliary as Être + participe passé, but do not always end the sentence with the agent preceded by preposition “par”.

In the third form, the clause leaves out the auxiliary and maintains past participle in the meaning of passive voice. Meaning is the important factors that must be taken into consideration in this form. In the fourth form or the passive in verbal pronominal form or verb with pronoun “se” in the passive meaning correspond with the study of Buddhapong, Sudarat(2001) on the substitution of the passive form être + participe passé by the verbal form pronominal. These two forms share the similar meanings, but they cannot be interchangeably used in all cases. In verbal pronominal form or verb with pronoun “se” in the passive meaning, state of patient does not appear and agent is not marked. The passive sentences can be seen from syntactic constructions, function and meaning of inanimate agent. These sentences correspond with the work from Maligul, Sa-ang (2013) that the verbal pronominal form or verb with pronoun “se” can be used in the passive meaning.

In the last form, the active clauses preceding with subject pronoun “on” as impersonal-subject to demote the agent acting as clauses subject correspond with the work from Buddhapong, Sudarat(2010) on Etude contrastive des moyens exprimant le passif en français et en Thaï (Contrastive Analysis of Passive Constructions In French and Thai). In her study, French noun phrase constructions order with passive meaning are occurred in third person singular impersonal noun which correspond with Givón (2001)’s work on the agent demotion domain on the part of impersonal-subject that agent is demoted, but still acts as the subject of the clauses.

From these summaries, features of French passive clauses correspond with functional-typological grammar by Givón as below.

1. Prototypical passives

1.1 The marked passive with auxiliary as Être + participe passé (the past participle) that shows the agent appeared in the clause and preceded by preposition “par” “de” or “dans” for example.

a) Fête démesurée, grandiose, le carnaval est marqué par l’abolition de tous les interdits,...

b) ...telqu’ils ont été définis par la Déclaration de 1789, confirmée et complétée par le préambule de la Constitution de 1946,...

1.2 The marked passive with auxiliary as Être + participe passé (the past participle) that the agent does not appear in the clause or demote the agent, for example.

a) Le Président de la République est élu pour cinq ans au suffrage universel direct.

b) Voici, la figure idéale du soldat tellequ’elle était décrite encore au début du XVII^e siècle

These examples represent French passive clauses in the first and second forms, these forms are prototypical passives sharing universal qualifications and these passive are mostly found. However, the difference is in the first category that shows the agent appears in the clause and is preceded by preposition “par” “de” or “dans”. In the second form, the agent does not appear in the clause or agent is demoted. It is general features of passive voice, agent is demoted by occurring in non-major parts of the clauses or does not occur at all

2. Less prototypical passives

2.1 The clause that leaves out the auxiliary and maintains past participle in the meaning of passive voice, for example.

a) ..., de sorte que les femmes divisées en deux lobes,...

2.2 The passive in verbal pronominal form or verb with pronoun “se” in the passive meaning, for example.

a) ..., dont l’oeuvre se singularize par sa lingerie raffinée...

b) ...: le soldat est devenu quelque chose qui se fabrique; d’une pâte informe, d’un corps inapte,...

2.3 The active clauses that begins with subject pronoun “on” to demote the agent, for example.

a) ..., on a fait la machine dont on a besoin : on a redressé peu à peu les postures;...

These examples represent less prototypical passives, these forms are not normally found, and they are lack of

some universal qualifications.

4. Conclusion and Discussion

The results show 3 important syntactic structures of passive clauses by Givón: 1) a syntactic procedure that demotes agent or the agent is not mentioned at all, 2) a syntactic procedure that does not promote agent, but other parts are promoted, and 3) a syntactic procedure of passive voice by maintaining the original syntactic structure of transitive verb. These results correspond with syntactic structure of French passive clauses.

Results also show the relationships and differences of anti-passive voice and passive voice. In passive voice sentence, patient is promoted as the subject of clause and demotes the agent in the clause. The main verb is transformed from transitive to in-transitive verb with the passive voice indicator in front of transitive verb. On the contrary, anti-passive voice clause, agent is important in the topic, but the patient in the topic is more demoted in this clause type that in active voice. In grammatical aspect, this construction is combined with verb or indirectly indicated.

The analysis of French passive clauses can be summarized into three features: 1) patient promoted clauses by occurring as the clauses subject. 2) agent demotion by occurring in non-major parts of the clauses or does not occur at all. 3) main verb as transitive verbs and transformed in a form intransitive verbs, except to some transitive verbs that cannot be transformed to passive, corresponding with Givón's theory (2001) in passives voice based on functional-typological grammar. In French, passive clauses are marked passive with auxiliary as Être + participe passé that show the agent appears in the clause and is preceded by preposition "par" "de" or "dans". These are prototypical passives of French passive construction.

However, there are some noticeable features in passive sentences in three intransitive verbs namely *obéir*, *déobéir* and *pardoner*. These verbs are followed by preposition à and following noun acts as dative. The verbal pronominal form or verb with pronoun "se" in the passive meaning does not mark state of patient and does not mark agent. Passive sentences in this case can be seen from syntactic structure, function and meaning of agent in impersonal-subject and in the less prototypical passives. In French, the active clauses, beginning with subject pronoun "on" as impersonal-subject to demote the agent, but still acting as the clauses subject, are used.

From French passive clauses forms, passive clauses in textbook and printed documents can be categorized into prototypical passives and less prototypical passives as below.

1. Prototypical passives

1.1 The marked passive with auxiliary as Être + participe passé (the past participle) that shows the agent appeared in the clause and preceded by preposition "par" "de" or "dans".

1.2. The marked passive with auxiliary as Être + participe passé (the past participle) that the agent does not appear in the clause or demote the agent.

2. Less prototypical passives

2.1 The clause that leaves out the auxiliary and maintains past participle in the meaning of passive voice.

2.2 The passive in verbal pronominal form or verb with pronoun "se" in the passive meaning.

2.3 The active clauses that begins with subject pronoun "on" to demote the agent.

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